

Rep. Gutierrez: "Unless we create legal immigration alternatives to

illegal immigration, all the Arizona laws in the world will not fix the problem."

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Media Contact: Douglas Rivlin (202) 225-8203

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(Washington, DC) – *Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on Immigration, issued the following statement in response to today's Department of Justice announcement regarding the Arizona immigration law, SB 1070.*

The lawsuit builds on the President's speech last week and makes it clear that the Obama administration is beginning to fully engage on the immigration issue. The Arizona law is a law-enforcement nightmare that potentially turns witnesses and crime victims into suspects and will make legitimate law-enforcement work much more difficult. The federal government has a responsibility to step in when states get U.S. law so fundamentally wrong.

But, the problem of illegal immigration is bigger than the state of Arizona and requires a national, federal response. The President made clear in his address at American University that we have to go beyond the strategies we have been using if we are to address border security and illegal immigration successfully. Tripling, quadrupling, or quintupling the manpower on the border hasn't worked and won't work in isolation from strategies to channel immigrants through our legal process and reduce the lucrative smuggling business. Unless we create legal immigration alternatives to illegal immigration, all the Arizona laws in the world will not fix the problem.

The Attorney General is right to step in and hold the Republicans in Arizona accountable to the law, even if it plays into the hands of the local politicians who prefer to stir up fear and animosity towards the immigrant community. The Arizona GOP is inflicting a tremendous cost on the people of Arizona, not only in the cost of defending the state against legitimate legal challenges, but also in terms of their reputation nationally and internationally.

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